You know you're a Burner, when...

You take the weird big bubble wrap stuff that your mail order computer equipment was packed in and wrap it around your body trying to come up with a playa fashion concept.

Someone says 'PVC' and you think 'shade structure' before thinking 'sprinkler pipe.'

Sneakers in the dryer sound suspiciously like the bad techno music you heard on Burn Night.

You have some Burner friends in a non-Black Rock City context, and you have to ask them what their real names are to order to introduce them to your more mundane friends.

You're much better prepared than most of your family and friends to handle a situation when the water or power goes out.

Your mundane friends come to you first to borrow camping equipment.

You get more e-mail from the Burning Man list than from spammers.

At an after-Christmas sale you're in the store, loading up on strings of lights because, "those would be great for our camp!"

You start wondering when tickets will be going on sale to an event that's still ten months away.

You go to a park and find yourself picking up even garbage and "moop" that others left behind.

Your new source of cool ideas in fresh gear for club wear and parties is the Army-Navy surplus store.

You go to the Louvre and wonder what all of the various "masterpieces" would look like wreathed in glorious flames.

Getting up everyday and putting on clothes seems unnatural.

You never really go camping but have way more camping gear than any of your friends.

You start saying things like, "This one time at Burning Man..." a la *American Pie*'s "One time at band camp" refrain.

You start lusting after the deluxe sun showers at REI.

You start collecting weird objects that just seem playa-esque.

Wearing ram's horns to a party seems like the most natural thing in the world.

Getting your oil changed at Jiffy Lube makes you giggle and then get all serious.

Going "home" takes on a whole new meaning in August.

Watching the acrobatics at Cirque du Soleil makes you wish you were running around doing cartwheels in Black Rock City.

You cave in the top of your Suburban and you smile ... because it was just enough wood to make your ideal structure.

You care more for the people you met in Black Rock City than your own neighbors.

The term 'freak' is a compliment to you.

People don't understand why you just "give things away." Or pick up litter.

Water becomes your drink of choice and you always subconsciously note whether or not you "piss clear."

You're heard arguing with another man about who's skirt is more manly.

You keep multiple bottles of water stored in the fridge and in your car. And you don't live within hundreds of miles of a desert.

The wallpaper on your screen is a shot you took of a piece of untouched Playa from five feet in the air.

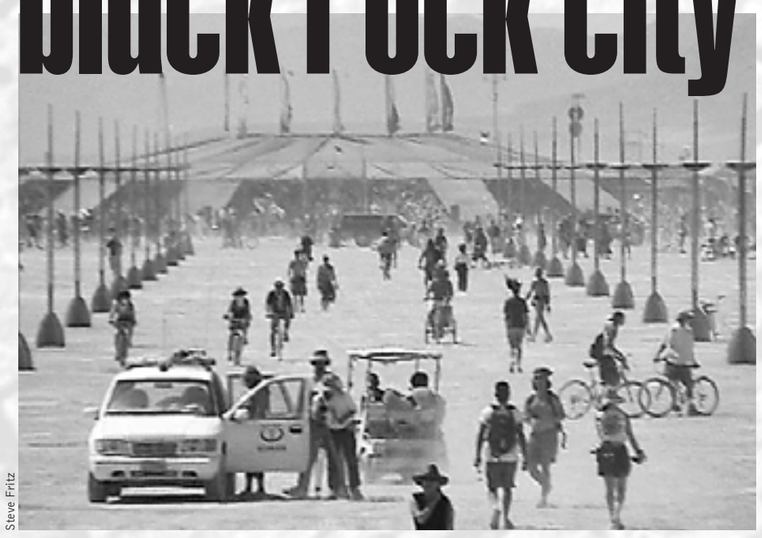
You'd drive three hours on the crappy traffic-choked interstate just to have a beer with somebody you camped near two years ago.

You subconsciously break your non-BM friends down into two categories: Those that could appreciate and involve themselves and become Burners, and the others.

– compiled by Penfold, Pyrokitten, Bobby G, Fred Silver, Joe McCleskey, Dogdrum, Erika Bellas, Andy Wing, Bonzai, William Schaeffer, iD, and SirJames of the Playa

our second quadrennial best of black rock city

compiled by MYSTERIOUS D LOIS LAYNE ADRIAN ROBERTS



Steve Fritz

What self-respecting alternative newspaper doesn't put out an annual "Best of" issue, huh? We did our first "Best of Black Rock City" four years ago, in 1998, so admittedly, we haven't exactly been on the ball. Consider this our second quadrennial "Best of" and let's just leave it at that.

This year, we actually got our shit together. We've been trolling the playa, searching for – in our humble opinions – the best this city has to offer. We hope you enjoy this highly-opinioned list.

places

BEST PROOF THAT BURNING MAN ISN'T JUST A BUNCH OF HIPPIES AND RAVERS

Death Guild Thunderdome
Esplanade & 120°

We can't tell you how excited we were when the Death Guild Thunderdome first appeared on the playa back in '99. Finally, an antidote to all the hippy-dippy peace and love bullshit! Black Rock City needed some aggro, dark energy, and Death Guild brought it.

Sick of hugs from strangers at rave camps? Can't stand another drum circle? Don't beat up a hippie! Instead, get your ass to the 'Dome, where you can get out your aggressions in a swinging, *Mad Max*-style battle. "Two men enter, one man leaves!" If you're lucky, you might even get to hear Diva Marisa sing before the battles begin. Climb the dome for a better view of the fights, and pound your head to the blasting industrial music. As if that weren't enough, Thunderdome is also home to great art cars and bikes, hot gothic babes, and some excellent fireplay.

BEST PLACE TO BE A DICKHEAD

Camp Dickface
within Fandango, Esplanade & 225°

Ever feel like you need an excuse to be a dickhead? No, we didn't think so. But if you did, trek on over to Camp Dickface and lend them a helping er... uh... See, they take photos of celebrities, comedians, and politicians that just aren't complete without the help of your member. Camp Dickface welcomes all shapes and sizes, real and not-so-real. They may even be able to provide you with a stand-in – just be careful how you ask for it.

BEST PLACE TO GET YOUR ASS WHIPPED

Temple of Atonement
Esplanade & 210°

This place has been Black Rock City's premiere BD/SM theme camp for as long as we can remember. Their St. Andrew's cross is a favorite of the *Piss Clear* editors, perfect for disciplining proofreaders who miss typos. Come before The Judge and offer yourself to be cleansed, or bring a friend who needs a little tough love. You may not walk away from the Temple of Atonement with a silly playa gift, but we can assure you this theme camp leaves its mark.

BEST PLACE TO PICK UP A HOOKAH

Hookahbar @ Hookahdome
Esplanade & Port 270°

You'll smell all kinds of aromas at the Hookahbar. Be sure to ask for your own personal nipple. One of the things we like about this bar is that they're all about sharing in the joys of hookahs. Besides a little flavored smoke on the hookah, they'll also serve you tea and entertain you with belly dancers. Inhale, exhale, ahhhhh.

BEST PLACE TO SHARE YOUR TOOL

Black Rock City Hardware
180° Great Circle

BRC Hardware is the place to get down and dirty with your tool, or someone else's! Did you forget your toolbox? Or did your bike just bite it? Stop by BRC Hardware, they might just have what you need. _

BEST PLACE TO CHILL

Camp Antarctica
within Disturbia, Esplanade & 290°

This year's sizzling hot temperatures make Antarctica quite the chilly treat. This refrigerated tractor trailer is *the* place to hang out and be cool, especially with Snowball (right) spinning chillin' grooves every day from 10 AM - 6 PM at her 40° dance party.

BEST PLACE TO PANHANDLE

Filthy Rich Camp
Bowsprit (2500') & 285°

"Spare a dime?" "Got an extra beer?" Nothing screams urban blight like people begging on the street, and if Black Rock City is going to pretend to be a city, well then damn it, we need panhandlers! And there's probably no better place for them than Filthy Rich Camp. Stop by see what you can get. And if you get a little extra, swing on by *Piss Clear*...

nightlife

BEST PLAYA CELEBRITY SPOTTING

StarLust Lounge
320° Center Camp

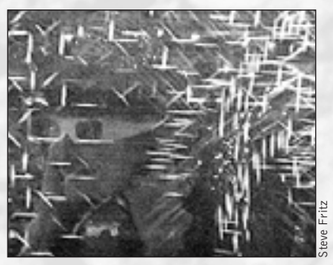
This year, as we rolled into Black Rock City close to midnight, frazzled from the long drive, noone made us feel more welcome than the bartenders at the StarLust Lounge. And seeing as that they're located practically in Larry Harvey's backyard, you never know *who* you're going to run into! Definitely the place to see and be seen.

Steve Fritz

BEST WAY TO SEE SOMETHING SHOCKING

Dr. Megavolt vs. The Mutaytor
Saturday night after the Burn
Island of Misfit Science,
200 feet from The Man

We haven't seen *this* Dr. Megavolt performance yet, but past experience tells us that this will no doubt be the most shocking thing on the playa. After the Burn, Dr. Megavolt will encounter the Mutaytor's tribal techno stage extravaganza. Be prepared to watch the mad doctor keep beat while we all shake our thang! _



Steve Fritz

BEST WAY TO TRIP WITHOUT LSD

Magic Glasses Camp
Esplanade & 165°

Grab some magic glasses and trip the light fantastic as you stroll through a myriad of twinkling and flashing lights. So simple, yet so effective. A Black Rock City institution! One question though: if you do this while on acid, do the visuals cancel each other out?

BEST PLACE TO HEAR OLD-SCHOOL ELECTRONICA

Club Verboten
Forecastle (2700') & 300°

Fuck two-step, fuck progressive trance, this is the place to kick it old-school, as DJs E.M.P. and Moth from the UK spin techno like mama used to make, every night at 11:11 PM. Club Verboten then turns into a nightclub called Late Night Kraftwerk, where you'll hear early electronica by bands such as Kraftwerk and Tangerine Dream. Last night they threw a fun party called Depeche Mode Nacht, which was just chock-full of New Wave. When you're tired of trance or funk, get your electro fix at Verboten.

BEST PLACE TO BE AT THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT

Camp New Day's Eve
Asylum @
Esplanade & 240°

Every night's a party at this camp and that's the way we like it! Champagne, noisemakers, party hats, this camp has everything you need to party like it's 1999. Okay, so you may need to bring your own bubbly if their supplies run short, but what you get is the excitement of celebrating a new day, every night! You can even make New Day's resolutions that you can actually *keep*, since you only need to stick to it for one day!

BEST DAMNED EVENT TO WHORE YOURSELF OUT FOR A MARTINI

Damnedsterdam
Plaza 270°

Damnedsterdam is a little taste of Amsterdam's Red Light District, right here in Black Rock City! They have cocktails, music, and – more importantly – a brothel window for *you* to perform in. Yes, you. Throw some red on and check out the Damned Red Light Wingding this Friday evening. Damned martinis and people pretending to be whores – you can't go wrong with that combination!

culture

BEST BURN (BESIDES YOU-KNOW-WHO)

Temple of Joy

Looking for that pre-1997 Burning Man vibe? Well then stick around till Sunday night to watch the beautiful Temple of Joy go up in flames. The burning of the Man is so ... amateur night. For jaded old-timers like ourselves, it's all about Temple of Joy burn – as close as we're going to get to the good ol' days of Burning Man. Less people, less drama, just a gorgeous, beautiful burn.

BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE

Eggchair Camp
Esplanade & 240°

Never has an Esplanade theme camp gotten so far on so little. It's a camp with a chair that's shaped like an egg. And, well... that's pretty much about it. Gotta admit though, it's a great seat.

BEST WAY TO GET A DATE

Delivering *Piss Clear*
Great Circle & Mainmast (2900')

Yes, believe it or not delivering Piss Clear is a great way to get a date. Every time we send out volunteers to help get our papers to the masses, they come back with stories of hot, throbbing love. There's nothing like going camp to camp, delivering BRC's sexiest and sassiest paper. Not only are you out meeting new folks by handing them *Piss Clear*, you also are showing them that you've got good taste!

BEST WAY TO GET SEVERAL DATES

PolyParadise
Forecastle (2700') & 210°

In the immortal words of Stephen Sondheim: "One is fun, why not two? And if you like two, you might as well have four." These people know how to be with the one they love *and* love the one they're with. If you have any curiosity about 'sharing the love,' stop on by PolyParadise — they're friendly and willing to answer your questions on polyamory.

BEST PLAYA CELEBRITY

NAMBLA the Clown

Okay look, we love NAMBLA the Clown as much as the next guy. But the *real* reason he makes our 'Best Of' list is so we have a convenient excuse to run this obligatory photo of him. Otherwise, we'd never hear the end of it. Some people require drugs out here, but NAMBLA requires press, and plenty of it.

BEST WAY TO AVOID CAMPMATE DRAMA

The Solo Collective
Mainmast (2900') & 150°

"You mean she didn't bring enough water?" "He didn't *really* tell the rave camp it was okay to camp next door, did he?" "Don't tell me he thought participation meant that he could drink ALL of our beer!" Anyone that's camped with a group has probably encountered more than their fair share of camp drama. That's why we're giving the nod this year to the Solo Collective. It's the low-drama way to camp for those who want to do it alone, but together. It's about self-sufficiency and fun. But it's also a great place to find a date – no baggage!

BEST NAME FOR A THEME CAMP

The Axis of Weebles
Bowsprit (2500') & 150°

We haven't even *been* to this camp, but ever since we saw them listed in the Theme Camp Guide, we've been cracking up ever since. Our sources tell us this camp has something to do with taking out your frustrations on Weebles, mostly with water pistols. But really, any Weeble torture method will do. Kick some Weeble ass!

BEST SUBSTITUTE FOR TOILET PAPER ON THE PLAYA

Black Rock Gazette
Need we say more? I mean, really?

WHAT'S OUT	WHAT'S IN
accidently flirting with someone of the same sex	accidently having sex with someone of the same sex
barter bars	free drinks
Black Rock Gazette	*Spock Science Monitor*
Burning Man	Temple of Joy
bull horns	horny bulls
chill camps	get off your ass and dance!
cold hard cash	Spanish Galleons
dehydration	water
desert chicks	hot mermaids
dogs	Aibos
driving	skipping
dry land	oceans
glow sticks	Krill lights
Larry Harvey	Larry Harvey
LED blinkies	EL wire
megaphones	foghorns
painting your dick blue and parading around as some form of radical self expression	painting your dick blue and parading around as an ironic joke
peeing on the playa	porta-pottys
pistachio nuts	pistachio ice cream
Red Bull	cocaine
RVs	tents
techno	funk
telephoto lenses	Viewmasters
the new rules	the old rules
war	peace
yahoos	Burners

— compiled by Caution Mike, Eggchair Steve, Lenny Jones, Malderor, Playa Kitten, Penfold, and Simian

I love DisneyMan™!

by Q

I don't know what everyone is bitching about. I just love DisneyMan.™

Every year, I bring my family to vacation here at DisneyMan,™ and we just love it. While we're here, we enjoy all of the pre-packaged DisneyMan™ sights and sounds of The Playa,™ without having to worry about things like "nature," a "sense of direction," or "our own pathetic survival instincts." It's cool, it's easy to get to, and it's a hoot.

Now I know most of you out there have probably heard something about how dangerous DisneyMan™ used to be, or about the wild crowd. Let me tell you a little secret: it's not like that now. And I sincerely doubt it ever was.

DisneyMan™ is the ideal vacation getaway spot, especially for today's hip, young, urban family. Heck, it was even featured in the California State Automobile Association's *Via* magazine last year. How's that for an endorsement?

DisneyMan™ is held in the same place every year, so there's no fear of not being able to find it once you get here. In fact, if you have a creative side to you, and an ability to meet deadlines, they'll even *save* a place for you to camp. Usually a really good place too, right on the Esplanade,™ with a grand view of The Man™ and the rest of The Playa.™ And now they have all these neat-o rules and regulations that make DisneyMan™ safer than a CEO in Bush's America.

They don't let people drive around like madmen in their "art cars" anymore. The 5 mph speed limit throughout the theme park is enforced by, get this, actual policemen! That's right, *actual* policemen are on every corner to protect me and my family, and to enforce all the rules that make DisneyMan™ such a special place. There are no guns, and they've even cracked down on nasty drugs, to boot!

But that's not all! There are tons of great events and fun arts and crafts camps for the kids. What better way to safely expose them to "fringe art" than through the filter of DisneyMan's™ highly-acclaimed Art Approval and Registration Board? Gee, I hope the Flaming Heart is back again this year!

My wife just loves The Man,™ standing so tall and erect, watching over the whole park. The night they burn The Man™ is like one big weenie roast, with firemen, fireworks for the kids, and the DisneyMan™ FireFlies™ – a professional fire-dancing troupe.

I feel so safe in the shadow of DisneyMan™!

Steve Fritz

The burning of The Man™ is great, and I love the symbolism because I work for the man, and without him I couldn't afford to take this vacation every year.

We're also very excited about DisneyMan's™ WaterWorld theme this year, and converted our entire theme camp to resemble Marine World. You see, every year, DisneyMan™ changes its theme just enough so that we can recycle last year's theme camp without having to buy a complete new set of prefabricated poles, parachutes, tarps, and shiny twirlie-thingies.

The one thing I will say about DisneyMan™ is that there is no way we could afford to do it without my upper-middle class San Francisco salary. All of that disposable income becomes a real necessity in order to be able to afford all the supplies we need to make DisneyMan™ feel exactly like home, but in the safety of a highly regulated "radical self-expression" event. We had to buy a new generator this year, and we also built a huge shade structure that resembles a waterfall. Come on by, we're at 270° and 2100'. If you don't see us out in the "water," knock – our RV is always open to new PlayaFriends.™

Yes, we love DisneyMan.™ It's safe, fun, and so expensive, that only us and our small group of similarly well-to-do friends can afford to go every year. We'll keep coming year after year, especially if it keeps getting safer and safer! We even thought about buying some property out here as we were leaving last year, but there's no way I'd want to bring my family out to The Playa™ without DisneyMan™ here. Who would protect us from ourselves?

Bitter Love

by DAN BITTER

Editor's note: *Dan Bitter is on vacation this week ... and it sure as hell isn't in Black Rock City! So we've decided to run Dan's very first 'Bitter Love' column, which made its debut in these pages way back in 1996. We figure most of you missed it back then anyway.*

sex advice

Hey Breeder:

I'm 22 years old, straight, and very good-looking, or at least that's what all my current girlfriends say. My question is this: I heard Burning Man is a great place to get laid, but all the babes here are freaks. What's a tactful way to ask a chick if she has a pierced labia or some weird shit like that?

— Proudly Unpierced

Mike Morrison

Hey, P.U.:

I think there's a football game on in Gerlach. If you leave now, maybe you can catch the last quarter.

Hey Breeder:

I met this cute guy in the mud pit yesterday, and we started talking and stuff, when all of a sudden he let his load out right there in the pit! I told him he was disgusting and inconsiderate of everyone else in the mud, but he swears he didn't come. He says it's common for a white slimy liquid to come out of the penis spontaneously, and that it wasn't come. Now, I know better than that, but just to make sure, what do you think?

— Badly Spooged

Hey B.S.:

Of course it was cum, you ditz, and not only is it inconsiderate, it's highly unsafe. With dozens of people squirming all over each other, any HIV-infected cum can easily squirm its way into someone's asshole or open wound. If you got any on you, B.S., you should definitely start to worry.

Hey Breeder:

I like to practice safe sex in the desert, but I never know what to do with the condom afterwards. I don't want to just leave it there for someone to find on their way to rave camp, but I can't just lie there and hold it between my fingers while I'm cuddling. What do I do?

— Condilemma

Hey C:

Ever heard of a ziploc bag, bonehead? That's what they were originally designed for, holding used condoms. And make sure you put it in your non-burnables trash bag; you don't want to treat your fire-buddies to the aroma of barbecued sex.

Got a question for Dan Bitter? Keep it to yourself, asshole!

libations

BEST PRICKS ON THE PLAYA

Cactus Ranch
Forecastle (2700') & 225°

The only thing more fitting than a cactus in the desert is a prickly pear margarita in my hand. Cactus Ranch offers yummy prickly pear margaritas amid the lovely desert landscape of cacti. These people are from Arizona, so they live it baby! You don't hear *them* complaining about the heat!

BEST PLACE TO GRAB A DRINK

Liquid Diet Lounge
Mainmast (2900') & 225°

These people keep up the age-old tradition of bonding through drinking. Good drinks and good company make this camp a place for playa boozehounds (like ourselves) not to miss.

BEST REASON TO WEAR ZEBRA, TEASE YOUR HAIR, AND SHOUT AT THE DEVIL

Eddie Camaro and Mr. B's Buttrockin' Air Guitar Car Bar

Are you ready to rawk? Prove it on this rockin' car bar, a traveling cocktail beacon of anti-electronica. Earn some frozen yumminess by thrashing around in the Dance Cage or showing off your skillz on the air guitar. Rock on, dude! They leave from the Temple of Atonement each day, so catch a ride!

BEST PLACE TO DONATE YOUR EXCESS DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Piss Clear
Great Circle & Mainmast (2900')

Can't finish your booze? Have a little extra stash? Win friends and favors by donating a little something special to the *Piss Clear* staff. We work hard to bring you the playa's best newspaper. And if you think we're above a little shameless plug, then you don't know us!

BEST TIME OF DAY

420 Tea Party Lounge
Forecastle (2700') & 75°

No one celebrates 4:20 like the 420 Tea Party Lounge. You can groove to the 420 music or if you'd rather chill, they also serve sun tea every day at 4:20. Now this is a high tea we just have to endorse! Bring your own cup and enjoy the friendly ambiance with a cup-o-homebrew.

BEST PLACE TO AVOID WAITING FOR A CUP-O-JOE

Camp Stimulation
Forecastle (2700') & 150°

Are the lines at the Center Camp Café too long? Of course they are. Avoid the maddening crowds and check out these these folks, who make a mean cup-o-joe. And tell Angelique, the cute coffee mistress, that *Piss Clear* sent ya!

style

BEST DUST MASK

greenscreen RAP

We're pretty sure the people who sell this awesome dust mask are gun nuts. But personal politics aside, we can't help but recommend this kick-ass and stylish dust mask. It looks just like a bandanna, but hidden inside is an activated carbon filtering system. A small soft nose clip allows you to bend the mask to stay on your nose without being uncomfortable, and an elastic strap pulls the RAP under your chin to prevent un-filtered air from being breathed. Plus, it's 100% cotton, ideal for Black Rock City's hot temperatures. You can't get one on the playa, so wait till you're home: http://www.mfiap.com/gs/rap.htm

BEST PLACE TO CHANGE YOUR LOOK

Barbershop Roulette Camp
Esplanade & 225°

Sure, anyone can don a wig or paint themselves purple, but it takes someone with real cajones to come to this camp. Spin the wheel and it's an all-new you! Will it be a crewcut? A mohawk? Or how about the ever-popular mullet? This is the best place to get a new look that will last well beyond your time here on the playa.

Playa Iron Liver Contest winner

And we have a winner! It was tough deciding which cocktail was truly the best in our first **Playa Iron Liver Contest** – especially towards the end, when our judgement was, shall we say, a bit compromised by all the fabulous entries.

In the end though, it was all about the Fandango Zombie – mostly because it turned us into one! Thanks to our winner, Steve Courtney of Fandango, and to everyone who entered the contest! We had a blast meeting you all!

Fandango Zombie

1 oz. Jamaican rum
2 oz. Puerto Rican rum
1/2 oz. 151 proof Demerara rum
1 oz. orange Curaçao
1 oz. orange juice
1 oz. lemon juice
1/2 oz. Grenadine
1 dash Pernod

Mix well with ice, serve in a 14 oz. glass. Fandango!

How to enjoy the Burning Man experience from the comfort of your own home

Pitch your tent next to the biggest speaker in a crowded, noisy club. Go to sleep. Pay an escort of your affectional preference subset to not bathe for five days, cover themselves in glitter, dust, and sunscreen, wear a skanky neon wig, dance close naked, and say they have a lover back home.

Drain all the water from your toilet. Vacuum it every three days. Hide all your toilet paper.

Throw a sprawling and drunken week-long party. Spend the next five weeks meticulously cleaning every square inch of your house.

Stack all your fans in one corner of your living room. Turn them on full. Dump a vacuum cleaner bag in front of them.

Sprinkle dirty sand in all your food.

Bust your ass for a "community." See all the attention focused on the drama queen cry-baby.

Spend thousands of dollars on a deeply personal art work. Burn it.

Set up a DJ system downwind of a three-alarm fire. Play a short loop of drum 'n' bass until the embers are cold.

Have a 3 AM soul baring conversation with a drag nun in platforms, a crocodile, and Bugs Bunny. Be unable to tell if you're hallucinating. Lust after Bugs Bunny.

– Jahn Rosstafarai

You know you're a yahoo when...

You name your theme camp "Narcs-R-Us" because chicks dig cops.

Mr. Hand becomes your best friend after chasing naked chicks in the desert for a week.

You get to the Burning of the Man early so you can save "seats" for your obnoxious friends.

You think "Leave No Trace" means cleaning up all DNA evidence after your "date."

You participate by drinking beer, yelling at chicks and complaining that it's too hot!

You made your costume all by yourself, but people keep asking you where bought that University of Nevada t-shirt.

You wear a cylume glowstick around your neck at night and diss everyone else for not "participating."

You're dumbfounded that people don't pirate vend when there's so much money to be made.

You can't go anywhere without your disposable camera – gotta photograph as many naked girls as possible to show your frat buddies.

You burn other people's art because after all, isn't Burning Man all about art and fire?

You get mad when told not to drive your SUV in camp because your new car is part of your radical self-expression.

You claim, "I'm not a Yahoo cause I look cool and get tons of chicks!"

You consume more beer than water.

Your idea of having fun is sitting inside an RV playing video games.

You think the best way to pick up a chick is to spike her drink.

You think Larry Harvey is Russ Limbaugh's Satanic event planner.

*– Excerpted from the **Yahoo Education Project** pamphlet. The YEP team hands out these educational pamphlets to any suspicious yahoos on the loose. Supplies are limited so don't delay. Stop by the original Light Brite camp for a copy or check out Center Camp and various porta-potties around the playa.*